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ELIZABETH'S CHILDREN

Elizabeth, eldest child of Jacob and Elizabeth Zimmerman Gerig, was born in Pfastatt, Alsace, France, August 20, 1817. This village has long since become a part of the city Mulhausen, which place remained her home until fifty-five years later, when she with her two sons came to America. The Gerigs' ancestors were Anabaptists (now called Mennonites) who had moved to France from Switzerland about 1750, and in their homes continued to speak a mixed language of Swiss and High German, known as Alsatian Dutch.

The parents of Jacob Gerig (Christian Gerig and Elizabeth Goldschmidt) were wealthy land owners and farmers; but after he was married and on his own he made unfortunate investments, and, with other bad management, he lost all that he had. As is often the case, his greatest loss was not financial, but spiritual and mental, causing him to become discouraged and indifferent. During this time he had a growing family to provide for. Altogether, thirteen children were born to these parents of whom eight lived to maturity.

Because of these circumstances, Elizabeth's early life was not an easy one. She was expected to help her mother at an early age and received very little formal education. In those days, the schools among the Mennonites were of a rather low level. As it seemed they maintained their own, but usually the teachers were untrained and could teach only a few subjects. However, with the help of her mother, Elizabeth did learn to read while quite young and enjoyed it. In this way she educated herself. Her love for books all through her long life, coupled with her rich experiences, made her a very fascinating story-teller. She could relate the incidents of her youth and later life in a very interesting and impressive manner to her grandchildren, who never tired of listening to her. She always gave due credit to God, the heavenly Father, for his great love and sympathy for her mother, whom she revered.

Truly, this mother must have been a remarkable woman. For, following the family's misfortune, the rearing of these children depended largely upon her. With God's help, it was so successfully done that all the members of the family became useful Christians as well as respected citizens. Now that the Gerigs were poor and there were no compulsory school or child labor laws, Elizabeth and her brother, Christian, already became wage earners at the age of thirteen and eleven respectively. The two children worked in a large woolen cloth factory over two miles from their home. Factories in their day were not as efficient as now, and their work was to shear off any loose ends or knots on the cloth as it was rolled from one machine to the other for final finishing and pressing. The work does not sound too hard, but was tedious and tiring with long hours and ridiculously small wages even for children.

One evening, when darkness came early, these two tired and hungry children were returning home. Here the incident happened which was one of Elizabeth's favorite stories. Near their home was a small stream. This evening it was nearly dark when they came to the bridge and discovered a large wolf which had wandered from the forest, lying on the bridge right in their path. Although the wolf seemed to be sleep, they decided not to walk over it, as that might waken him. So, tired as they were, they retraced their steps and went home by another way, making their route much farther. When they finally arrived at the gate, Christian said, "I will say my prayers before I get into the house so I can eat immediately when I get to the table, as I am so hungry." In conclusion, she would say to her grandchildren, "You are very fortunate and must always be grateful to God that you live in a land of plenty and do not need to go hungry."

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When she was about sixteen, Elizabeth wanted to earn more. Since her younger sisters were able to help their mother now, she thought she would take a full-time job and began looking for work in the city. From one of her friends, she learned that the Helmans wanted a girl as a cook in their home and went to inquire about the place. To her great surprise, the Helmans were millionaires who lived in a mansion surrounded by wonderful gardens. On this estate, nearly a score of people were employed: gardeners, coachmen, stable boys, maids, and governesses for the children. Elizabeth's courage almost failed her in her first contact with this home, for she realized how inexperienced she was for such a position. All the cooking she had ever done was helping her mother in her own home, and this was indeed a far cry from this kitchen in the city. However, after talking to Mrs. Helman, she found her to be kind and sympathetic, urging her to try for the place and also promising to teach and help her until she would become accustomed to the work. She at once knew this was a Christian woman, and, since Elizabeth had already become a member of the Church, she had faith that her heavenly Father would not fail her. With this confidence, she agreed to go to the Helmans. (Of course she always referred to these people as Madam and Monsieur, but for convenience we shall call them Mrs. and Mr.)

As she expected, the first few months were rather difficult in her new environment. But, later, she grew very fond of this family, a feeling which was mutual, for she served in this home over a period of thirteen years, until she married and entered her own home. The Helmans held a place next to her own kin and family in her affections all her life. Much entertaining was done in the Helman home, and these were the hard days for Elizabeth at first. But Mrs. Helman would give her complete instructions before the guests arrived, and after the big dinner or luncheon was over, she would praise her very highly and say how proud of her she was. Everything was served just as she wished it, including the plum pudding which was brought to the table aflame.

While working in the city, Elizabeth kept in close touch with her home. Her half-days off duty each week she spent with her family, where for some years children were still being born. She was past twenty-five years old when her youngest brother, Benjamin, entered the family.

Her mother told her shortly before his birth, that she feared the older son, Christian, resented having any more children in this large family. Feeling sorry for her, Elizabeth took it upon herself to speak to her brother about this, without her mother's knowledge. When the baby came, big brother took him in his arms and surprised his mother by making a great fuss over him, causing his mother to shed tears of joy in her relief. Benjamin was destined to play a very important role in Elizabeth's life in future years, as we will learn later.

In the Helman home, the older daughter was now married and had taken over as mistress. This, however, did not change Elizabeth's status as cook, for Mother Helman was still living with the Schoners, as the home was now called. During this time, romance entered Elizabeth's life in the person of John Jacob Meyer, a young engineer in the big cotton mill of Dollfus, Meig & Company of Mulhausen. In this factory D.M.C. Crochet and knitting cotton was manufactured, much of which was and still is used in America.

It was quite a thrill when she discovered that her granddaughters were using this cotton made in the factory where her husband, and later her son for a short time, had charge of the stationary engines.

Elizabeth stayed in the home with the new mistress two more years and then was married to Jacob. As a wedding gift, Mrs. Helman furnished the young couple's home

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far better than Elizabeth or her husband could afford. She did this to show her appreciation for Elizabeth's faithful service in their home.

Their first home was an apartment near the factory where Jacob was employed. The second year after her marriage, their home was gladdened by the birth of their son on October 16, 1846. He, too, was named Jacob after his father and both of his grandfathers. This Jacob G. Meyer was destined to become the father of all of Elizabeth's grandchildren. The remainder of her long life was spent in close proximity to him. It seems that there were less than six years, when he was first married, that his mother did not live in the same home with him.

When her son, who was then the Gerig's only grandchild, was less than three years old, her beloved mother was called home at the age of fifty-one years (1848). In France, the cemeteries were all controlled by the Catholic church, Protestants were not permitted to bury their dead inside the enclosure, only outside the fence. As an honor to her, and a mark of the high esteem in which Mother Gerig was held by her neighbors and friends, the church authorities voted her a good enough Christian to be buried inside the fence, even though she was a Mennonite!

Only three years later, the husband, Jacob Gerig, passed away also, his age being sixth-three (1851). Little Jacob G. Meyer, although he was less than five years old, said he always remembered his Grandfather Gerig's burial because it was springtime and the ground was very soft and muddy, making it difficult for him to walk with his mother from the hard road to the cemetery. So his father, who was one of the bearers, picked him up and set him on the bier, making such an impression on the boy that he never forgot it.

Truly, the Gerig family suffered a tremendous loss in the death of both Mother and Father in such a short period, especially the two younger sons, Sebastian and Benjamin, who were only ten and six respectively and now orphans.

Elizabeth, being twenty-five years older than Benjamin, could easily have been his mother. He was only four years older than her own son, and she had great sympathy for these two young brothers in their bereavement. She asked them to come and make their home with her family, and she would be a mother to them until they could be on their own.

These were the years when many Mennonite families chose to migrate to America when their sons reached the age when they would have to serve in the army in France. It would not be many years until Sebastian reached this age, or at least would not be permitted to leave the country without being called a deserter.

A family by the name of Schlatter was making plans to leave France with the sons for this same reason and asked Sebastian to come with them as a member of the family. While it was hard for Elizabeth to see him go, she felt that it was for the better. So it was arranged that he take this opportunity to come to America, the land of promise to those seeking freedom from militarism.

The Schlatter family came to Canada and settled there but after Sebastian had repaid them for their kindness to him, he went to the state of Iowa. Here the prairies were covered with sage brush and the land was given to homesteaders for the clearing of it. And it was here he got acquainted with the Goldsmiths, who were also pioneers, having moved West from Ohio. With them he made his home.

A few years later, Benjamin came with the Sommers family, who settled in Stark County, Ohio. One Sunday, after living with them for a year, he walked to Orrville, in Wayne County, and became acquainted with the Schrock's. He worked for them, then

married their daughter, Lydia, and made this his permanent home. This farm near Smithville is now known as the Gerig farm, where all the Benjamin Gerig children were reared. It is still owned and operated by Gerigs.

After Benjamin's marriage, Sebastian came to Ohio to visit him and worked in Wayne County for a year. But his interest in Lena Goldsmith took him back to Iowa, where he married her and spent the remainder of his life.

The Sebastian Gerigs also reared a family in the Mennonite church, where he was called to the ministry and served as Bishop (in the Sugar Creek Church) until his death.

It was some years later that Benjamin was ordained to the ministry in Wayne County, and later served as Bishop at the Oak Grove Church until his departure. He was followed by his son Jacob, who is still serving emeritus; while the present minister at Oak Grove is Virgil M., the great-grandson of Benjamin and the great-great-grandson of Jacob Gerig of Pfastatt, France.

Returning now to Elizabeth's home -- a daughter was born to her when Jacob was six years old. However, Alice lived for only two years when she was stricken with a childhood disease and passed away very suddenly. She was deeply mourned by her parents.

Four years later, February 24, 1855, the second son was born to the Meyers. They named him Albert Matthew, after his paternal grandfather. His mother further explained that she called him Albert because the Boss's name at the factory was Matthew and she wanted to avoid confusion by giving him that name.

Jacob, being ten years old, was already in school when his brother was born. Elizabeth was happy that her children had access to very good schools in the City of Mulhausen, in comparison to the schools that she and the older Gerig children had attended.

Both of the Meyer boys were studious and learned readily. While in the upper grades both did extra work to help finance their education. Jacob worked as a copyist for an attorney, as typewriters were not yet used. He worked after school hours and on holidays, copying manuscripts. This practice made him a proficient writer, which was useful to him all of his life.

Albert's work was in a hardware store. After a time, he became a clerk and earned enough working after school and on Saturdays to buy his own books and other school supplies.

These years passed all too quickly in the Elizabeth Meyer family. Very soon Jacob's school days were over and he was to report for military training. This grieved his mother sorely, for she had been taught from youth that war was not for Christians. In her dilemma, she prayed fervently to God, trusting for a better way for her sons and all mothers' sons who felt that war was un-Christian. She learned that in different ways God comes to the rescue and answers prayer in his own way and time. How little did she know what was in store for her!

Soon Jacob was called and was stationed at Brest, a seaport five hundred miles from home. Never having been away from home before, he became desperately homesick. During the first months he was away from home, his grieving mother shed many tears over the letters she received. About nine months after he left home, his father became ill very suddenly with pneumonia. After fighting a losing battle with the disease and being sick only five days, he succumbed, passing away February 16, 1868, at

the age of fifty-three years. When Jacob received the sad news, he reported to his officers. They asked him whether his mother had anyone else to support her. When he said he was her older son, they at once said he would be put on the reserve list and could go home to his mother and young brother after the proper procedure.

However, these arrangements took several days and he did not get home to his broken-hearted mother until several days after his father's funeral. These were sad days for her. Even though her son was permitted to come home and was at once given his father's position in the factory she had experienced a staggering blow in the sudden loss of her dear husband and father of her sons.

When her two brothers, who were now both prosperous farmers in America, learned of the tragic news of the death of John Jacob Meyer, they were ready to help their widowed sister who had befriended them when they were orphaned. They insistently urged the fatherless family to come to America, the land of opportunity for the boys and freedom from the threat of militarism, which existed in Europe.

Elizabeth was past fifty years old. It was not easy for her to leave her home, country, sisters, and life-long friends, but she felt convinced that it would be better for her sons, who were eager to make the change. She told her sisters, Mary (Mrs. Joseph Roth) and Katherine (Mrs. Jacob Koebel) about this and asked them why they and their families did not get ready and go with them. They could not yet make up their minds as their sons were younger. They seemed to forget how soon they would be called for military training. Elizabeth always regretted that each one in the Gerig family came to America by themselves. She thought the long journey would have been more pleasant for all if there were a group of families. They all came for the same reason but none were able to decide until there was an emergency. Yet, in the next few years all the families and parents still living came to the new land. Nearly all spent some years in Wayne County, but most of them went farther west, first to Iowa and still later to Oregon where the sons and daughters of Christian Gerig reared their families.

Now that the Meyer family was preparing to come, the question confronted Elizabeth as to what of her cherished belongings she would be able to bring with her. She was advised to sell all, except the bedding and chests with clothing. Besides some books and small trinkets, her grandchildren remember the horse-hair mattress on her bed which she used many years.

After the final arrangements were made and the goodbyes spoken, the family of three sailed from Havre on a British ship. They were on the Atlantic for seventeen days, most of them rather stormy. All became sea-sick, especially son Jacob, who wished he were back in France. He wished this many times before he became a good American.

While on the ship, the language question confronted them, for they could not converse with very many people, as English was spoken. They landed in New York on July 4, 1872. While trying to get some sleep in a hotel, they were alarmed at the noise and shooting taking place. Elizabeth met a man who could speak German and told him they had come to this country to get away from war. Now it seemed they had it here, too. He smiled and told her that this was not war, but a national holiday they were celebrating today. Needless to say, she was relieved, but still thought it a rather strange welcome to the land that was to be their home. Because of this, the Meyer family celebrated Independence Day as a very special anniversary.

In a few days, the travelers reached Orrville, Ohio. Here Uncle Benjamin Gerig met them and took them to his home, driving them through heavily wooded land practically all of the way from Orrville to the Gerig farm. Elizabeth asked her brother if they were going to live in a wilderness.

Being July, it was harvest time when the two city-bred foreign boys got their first taste of farm life in America. They soon discovered that the change was going to be difficult. They had so much to learn in this new world. At first both said they were actually afraid of a horse and went through laughable maneuvers when they were supposed to harness a team. Uncle Ben was patient and tried to teach them, keeping them both working with him until he thought they were experienced enough to be of help to strangers. The Gerig children were too young at this time to be of any help on the farm, so it worked out very well to have these older nephews, even though it took time to train them.

Elizabeth, of course, could help in the house where she was much appreciated. There were several young children at this time. Later the Meyer family lived in the house on the David Schrock farm where John B. Leichty now lives. Gerigs owned this place and had the new family live here while the land was being cleared and farmed on the home farm.

Living here, Elizabeth found a good friend in her cousin, Mrs. Moses Schrock (Christina Gerig). Christina had lived in this new land for a number of years and, knowing the customs, would give Elizabeth advice when she was not sure about the proper procedure. These two were good friends as long as they lived.

The first autumn, when the work was not so pressing, the two boys thought they would learn to speak English more readily by going to school. However, this did not work too well for Jacob. Because of its similarity to French, he could read English very readily, but gave it the French pronunciation and accent. As a result, all of the pupils laughed whenever he would recite. Just one week was all he could take of this, and that was the extent of his schooling in America. At Green Center, Albert, being so much younger, went the whole term. The late J.M. Smucker spoke of this and said he was ashamed of himself later, as he was one of those who had laughed but was too young to know better.

The second year, the family lived for a few months in Jacob Yoder's new house. His wife had died and he asked Elizabeth to move there to care for his house. From here, they moved into the log house on the Gerig farm, which was later the J.S. Gerig home after he was married and had built a new house.

In Mulhausen, Elizabeth, with her family, had worshipped in the Reformed Church where her husband had been a member. After coming to America, where both of her brothers were influential members in the Mennonite group, she and her sons united with the Church of her youth at Oak Grove, where John K. Yoder was bishop at this time.

A few years later, Jacob was married to Anna Stucky (1875), and Elizabeth's first grandchild was born. (From now on, we will refer to her as Grandma). This was David F., who lived in Iowa all of his married life, having found his companion there.

Now Jacob became interested in a home for his own family and learned that the Christian Sommer family was ready to retire and wanted some young folks to farm their place. They had no family and no near relatives in America and wished to stay on the farm while they lived. The house was too small for two families, so it was decided to build two more rooms for them. Jacob was to purchase the place on the installment plan. Besides caring for the Sommers he was to pay a specified sum yearly for ten years. Then the farm was to belong to him. It was located one mile north of Milton Center in the Chippewa Creek low land. This place became the Jacob G. Meyer home, where all of the children were reared to maturity.

At first, this seemed to be a good arrangement to give the young family a start, but later it did not work out so well. Circumstances arose which changed things abruptly. During the next three years, two daughters, Leah and Elizabeth, named for Grandmother, were born to Jacob and Anna. This brought the family to three children.

The Sommers were both ailing and needing much care, making the work hard especially, for the young mother. Grandma and Albert lived nearby and helped with the work, both indoors and outside on the farm.

The following year, tragedy struck this home, when three deaths occurred in the same year. The Sommers both passed away, within a few months of each other. Only a short time afterward, the over-wrought young mother Anna, also entered her rest, leaving the Father with three children, the youngest only eighteen months old.

Their three graves are in the northeast corner of the Pleasant Hill Cemetery. They were among the first to be buried there, as the Church was built only a few years previous to this. The three small head stones were identical and stood in a row. After Jacob's death in 1930, he was placed on the north of Anna and five years later, Mother Mary was placed north of Jacob. Now a large stone with the names of the three parents inscribed on it, marks the graves of the Jacob G. Meyers.

Grandma and Albert now moved into the motherless home and she served as Mother to these three children. Both she and Albert lived in this home the remainder of their lives.

Two years later Jacob married Mary Conrad of Louisville, Ohio, who became a member of the household. Little Elizabeth, who was now nearly four, always remembered when her Father married the new Mother, as this was a gala day for her. Mary's entrance to this home did not change the relationship of these children to their grandmother. Mary was satisfied with her method of training and never interfered with her discipline.

To the credit of both of these women who lived in the same house for twenty-two years, until the going home of Grandma, it can be truthfully said there was no mother-in-law trouble. Not even later, when Mary had nine children in this home, was there any partiality or favoritism practiced by either Mother or Grandma. This was one family with no reference, whatever, to step-mother, as some are pleased to call such as Mary. Elizabeth was Grandma, and Mary was mother to all of the twelve, while Father was the head of the family.

The twelve all grew to maturity and all married except Mary Jane, who unfortunately lost her hearing while she was yet in her teens. All those that have families are grateful to their parents and Grandma and Albert for the Christian training we received. What a happy home life we enjoyed, despite the fact that we never had much of this world's goods. We were taught that spiritual values are much more important than mere possessions. We were urged to be industrious and thrifty. Our parents instilled into us a love for God and the Church, and were pleased when their sons and daughters were useful in furthering the cause of Christ. Under this teaching, these twelve all became affiliated with the Church of their Elders early in life and all grew to maturity in this faith.

Grandma had exerted great influence in the early life of this family, aiding the busy young mother in teaching and training, as only a Christian grandmother could do. Especially, was this true of the older ones of her grandchildren. The younger ones could not appreciate her wonderful personality because her keen mentality was on the decline before their time.

She was given the privilege of naming the youngest member of the family. She said she always loved the name Adele, as she had a good friend with this name in the old country. As an honor to her, father and mother preferred this name to several more modern names suggested by the older girl members of the family.

Adele was only five years old when Grandma fell asleep on the first day of February, 1905, after a short illness that confined her to bed for two days. She was in her eighty-eighth year. Eleven of the grandchildren were in the home at this time. David who was married and lived in Iowa, was the father of the two great-grandchildren, Elmer R. Meyer and Mabel Meyer Roth, whom Grandma had never seen.

Grandma's great concern during her last years was Uncle Albert. He had always regarded his older brother as a guardian, since he was so young when his father had died. She had often said she hoped that Jacob would outlive Albert for this reason. Albert was as much interested in Jacob's family as the parents themselves. He loved children. When they were young and their mother was busy, he was never too tired to amuse and play with them. Later, he was an older brother to all of the boys and gave them help in their work as well as good advice. He was proud of all of these nieces and nephews.

We will always remember how he comforted Mother when she was sad and distressed because Jacob C. and Emanuel A. were called to training camps during World War I. Albert came in one day and noticed the tears while she was at work. He said, 'Mary, I know it almost breaks your heart that this has come to your sons, but you are, after all, a fortunate mother. Your boys are Christians, and have the training and stamina to take care of themselves in any emergency. You can trust them anywhere. There are plenty of mothers who cannot have this confidence, and they are the ones to worry.'

These two boys had both been in college. Elmer was at home, where he was exempted to do the farming. In 1920, Elmer was married, and the folks moved off the farm to the house at the south end of the farm, which had been sold years before, and was now re-purchased. Albert moved into his home with them but still worked for Elmer at the old home. He lived nineteen years after his mother's death, although her wish was granted and he preceded his older brother by six years. He was busy at the barn as usual when he suddenly collapsed with a heart attack and was gone to his long-deserved rest, leaving this troubled world in January 23, 1924, at the age of sixty-nine.

The boys and girls who were so near to him, were by this time quite scattered. All were married except two, and Elmer was the only one of the boys living in Wayne County at this time. They all found their way home for Uncle Albert's funeral, where he was laid to rest beside his mother in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

All during this time, Clara was employed at the bank in Sterling and was the family chauffeur. She was at home only after work. After Albert's death, with only Jenny and Clara in the home, things were again shaping up for a change. Two years later, Clara was married to John W. Lerch and it was thought best for them all to move to Sterling. So their new home was again sold and the Henry Steiner property was purchased, where the parents and Jenny lived. The Lerches also lived in Sterling, as Clara continued to work there while her husband owned half interest in a grocery store in Wooster. In this store they sold home-baked pies, cakes, and cookies baked by Jenny, who could do this while living with her parents. This was the beginning of what has been her work ever since. After leaving the grocery store and living in Wooster, Lerch's purchased a bakery. Jenny worked there as long as they owned it and, even when it changed hands, she worked for some time for the new proprietor. Later, she found how much more convenient it was for her to work in the college bakery, where she will probably serve as long as she wishes to work.

After living in Sterling about four years, Father's health began to decline. While we could see that he was not in his usual good health, he was never bedfast and attended church services. He had been ailing for a week when he peacefully passed away during the early morning hours.

Again all of this family was assembled to pay their last respect to a dear Father who was buried beside his wife, Anna. He was the last of the family that had come from across the ocean, as Mother Mary belonged to the next generation and was born in America.

Father died on February 16, 1930, the exact date that his father had died in Mulhausen sixty-two years earlier. At the time of his death, there were thirty-three living grandchildren; seven were born later, making a total of forty grandchildren born to the twelve children of Elizabeth's son, Jacob. At the present time, there are sixty-five great-grandchildren of Jacob and these are increasing in number.

The Meyer family had only Mother Mary left, as she was of the later generation of Europeans having been born in America on August 26, 1857. Her paternal grandfather, Jacob Conrad, came to America from Switzerland in 1823 and was a Mennonite minister. Her maternal grandfather was Christian Klabill, who died in Belfort, France. His wife with her four children came to America in 1839. The eldest of these four was Katherine, who married Joseph Conrad. They were the parents of Mother Mary.

Being now bereft of her husband, and, as usual when two people have lived together so long and have reared a family, Mother Mary found the separation hard. She always said especially when father was younger he was the optimistic one of the family. When there was sickness or difficult times, he could always look on the bright side and cheer her, who could not take things so lightly.

When all of the children were married except Jenny, Mother felt lonely. The year before Father's death, Lerches had moved into their new home in Wooster. It was very convenient for Jenny to go and live with them, since she was working for them.

Mother wanted to be where there were children and thought that Elmers, who had several young children and were moving out of the old home to the Edwin Steiner farm, would have a home where she would like to live. She was with them for one year. Then, after Lerches' first child, Patty, was born, she went to live in Wooster with them. Here she lived until all three of the Lerch children were born, and was happy to be able to help care for them. The ten other members of the family have always felt very grateful to the Lerches, who have done so much for Mother and Jenny, who still lives in their home.

The home and furniture in Sterling was sold before, so Mother had no more worries about that. While she was not in robust health any more, she lived five more years after the home was broken by Father's death. Quite unexpectedly, her heart failed and she was gone to her heavenly home. Again the members of this family, who were getting quite scattered, were called home. The daughters all lived in Wayne County, but not so the sons. Two of these were at home in Iowa, one in Pennsylvania, and the other lived in Cleveland. Only Elmer lived in Wayne County. Later J.C. moved back to the old community, so that at the present time, the six daughters still living and two sons are living in the community where they were born.

Mother was laid in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery, as we have already noted, and the twelve have only memories of the happy home life and the good times enjoyed together when Grandma, Albert, Mother and Father were with us. The older grandchildren often

1 speak of this and how they enjoyed going to Grandpa's for Christmas, Easter, birthdays and other gatherings celebrated together for many years.

On December 26, 1940, five years after Mother's death, this family circle was broken for the first time when we received word that Benjamin of Wayland, Iowa had passed away. He, with his family had enjoyed a family Christmas dinner and seemed his usual health. But the next day, while eating his noon-day meal, he suddenly became ill and expired before a doctor could be summoned. His near neighbors could hardly believe it, and the family in Wayne County thought it must have been an accident when they first heard of it.

Ten of the members of this family, all except E.A. and Elizabeth (Mrs. C. B. Fetzer) now went to the funeral. Her health had not been as usual, and she was having occasional attacks of colitis, as the doctor diagnosed it. She was very much disappointed, but thought she could not stand the trip. It was two years later that she passed to her reward, after many months of suffering during which time she often spoke of what a nice way it was to go, as Benjamin had.

Leah (Mrs. D.S. Schrock), Elizabeth (Mrs. C.B. Fetzer), Katherine (Mrs. E.M. Yoder), Emma (Mrs. N.W. Schrock), David and Benjamin in Iowa, and Elmer reared their families on farms. Clara (Mrs. J. W. Lerch) and Adele (Mrs. U.M. Wenger) have always lived in town, while J.C. has taught in Western Reserve University, while living in Wayne County. E.A. reared his family in Biglerville, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. In this family six were at some time employed as teachers, but only Jacob C. made it his life work.

The six daughters and four sons remaining in this group are still carrying on, although the youngest is past fifty. All are trying to live in such a way as to make a contribution to their children's and grandchildren's lives. They think that this is the best way to show their respect to those gone before, who made it possible for them to enjoy the blessings by which they were surrounded.

In the hope that some member of this group will continue this little saga in the future years, we here end this story of Elizabeth's children, whose names are recorded in the following pages.

Katherine (Mrs. E.M. Yoder) 1951



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